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PTQ8152

RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(D)

PAGE 01 CARACA 00901 01 OF 02 081459Z
ACTION WHA-00

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	DOTE-00	SRPP-00	EB-00
	ED-01	FAAE-00	UTED-00	VC-00	HHS-01	H-01	TEDE-00
	INR-00	IO-00	L-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OMB-01
	PA-00	PC-01	PER-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00
	SP-00	SS-00	TEST-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	PMB-00
	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00	/008W			

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R 081359Z APR 02
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5346

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 000901

DEPT FOR WHA/PDA (BYERS)

DEPT FOR WHA/AND (NARANJO)

DEPT FOR INR (COZART)

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: SOCI, VE
SUBJECT: UPDATE ON THE CENTRAL UNIVERSITY

1. (U) BACKGROUND: ON MARCH 28, 2001, A MEETING ROOM IN
THE RECTOR'S OFFICE AT THE CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF VENEZUELA
(UCV) WAS SEIZED BY A GROUP OF STUDENTS, [REDACTED]

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FOR 36

DAYS, THE STUDENTS, CALLED "TOMISTAS" ("TAKERS" IN SPANISH),
HELD SWAY, HOPING TO FORCE THE RESIGNATION OF THE FAIRLY-
ELECTED RECTOR OF THE UNIVERSITY, GIOVANNI GIANNETTO, AND TO
RALLY OTHER STUDENTS IN THIS TRADITIONALLY LEFTIST
INSTITUTION TO THEIR SIDE. IN WHAT MUST HAVE BEEN A BITTER
DEFEAT, THE TOMISTAS FOUND THAT THE UCV STUDENTS COULDN'T
CARE LESS ABOUT THEIR CAUSE. PUTTING ON A BRAVE FACE, THEY
RETREATED OFF CAMPUS. END BACKGROUND.

THE SITUATION TODAY

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
CLASSIFIED BY DEPT. OF STATE, L. R. LOHMAN, DAS, A/ISS
REVIEW AUTHORITY: ALAN H FLANIGAN
CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL REASON: 1.4(D)
DECLASSIFY AFTER: 8 APR 2017
DATE/CASE ID: 23 FEB 2007 200503643

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2. (U) WHAT ARE THE RESULTS ONE YEAR LATER? RECTOR GIANNETTO, WHO APPEARED AT ONE POINT BELEAGUERED AND IN DANGER OF LOSING HIS SEAT, HAS BECOME STRONGER THAN EVER. VICE PRESIDENT ADINA BASTIDES, HERSELF AN EX-PROFESSOR AT UCV AND A STRIDENT SUPPORTER OF THE TOMISTAS (AND THE MOTHER OF ONE OF THEM), HAS BEEN RELEGATED TO THE MINISTRY OF PRODUCTION. LINA RON (SEE BELOW), THE [REDACTED] ORGANIZER FROM THE BARRIOS WHO LED THE PRO-CHAVEZ STUDENTS, IS IN POLICE CUSTODY, HER PHRASE, "I'LL DO WHATEVER PLEASES ME" TAKEN BY ANTI-CHAVISTAS AS "THE TRUE FACE" OF THE RULING PARTY. AND ELEVEN OF THE STUDENT PROTESTERS WERE EXPELLED.

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3. (U) MORE ATTEMPTS. ON MARCH 13 OF THIS YEAR, 200 PEOPLE MARCHED TO DEMAND THE "TRANSFORMATION" OF THE UNIVERSITY - A TERM UNDERSTOOD TO MEAN THE REPLACEMENT OF RECTOR GIANNETTO WITH SOMEONE OF A MORE CHAVISTA MIND-SET. THEY ALSO DEMANDED THAT THE 11 STUDENTS BE REINSTATED. NEWSPAPERS REPORTED THAT WHILE SOME OF THOSE IN THE DEMONSTRATION WERE UNCLASSIFIED

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TRULY STUDENTS, OTHERS WERE REPRESENTATIVES OF POOR NEIGHBORHOODS. SOME YOUTHS, HOODED TO AVOID IDENTIFICATION, LATER SCUFFLED WITH POLICE AND BURNED A CAR. POLICE, HOWEVER, RECOGNIZED THEM AS STUDENTS AT A VOCATIONAL SCHOOL SOME DISTANCE AWAY. UCV STUDENTS WERE UNIMPRESSED. SOME SHOUTED, "GO AWAY," TO THE MARCHERS. THE PRINCIPAL STUDENT ORGANIZATION, FEDERATION OF UNIVERSITY CENTERS, ISSUED A STATEMENT REJECTING THE MARCH AS UNJUSTIFIED, AND MOST STUDENTS SEEMED IN AGREEMENT.

4. (U) NEWSPAPERS REPORT THAT THE INCREASINGLY MILITANT BOLIVARIAN CIRCLES ARE STILL TRYING TO PENETRATE THE UNIVERSITY. RECENTLY THEY DISRUPTED A MEETING OF THE FEDERATION OF VENEZUELAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS. THEIR SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES WERE NOT CLEAR.

LINA RON

5. (U) LINA RON RECENTLY LED PRO-CHAVEZ FORCES TO COUNTER A MARCH PROTESTING THE TOMISTAS (LATE FEBRUARY OR EARLY MARCH). THIS LED TO A CONFRONTATION AND SOME VIOLENCE. GIANNETTO LED THE DEFENSE OF UCV STUDENTS, AND FILED A COMPLAINT LEADING TO RON'S INCARCERATION. RON HAS PUBLICLY THREATENED TO GET EVEN WITH GIANNETTO. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] VIOLENCE CONTINUES: A FEW WEEKS AGO, A BOMB ON THE UCV CAMPUS DESTROYED A PROFESSOR'S CAR.

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GIANNETTO AT THE HALF-WAY POINT

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	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OMB-01	PA-00	PC-01	PM-00
	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SS-00	TEST-00	TRSE-00
	T-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	DRL-02	G-00	SAS-00	/008W

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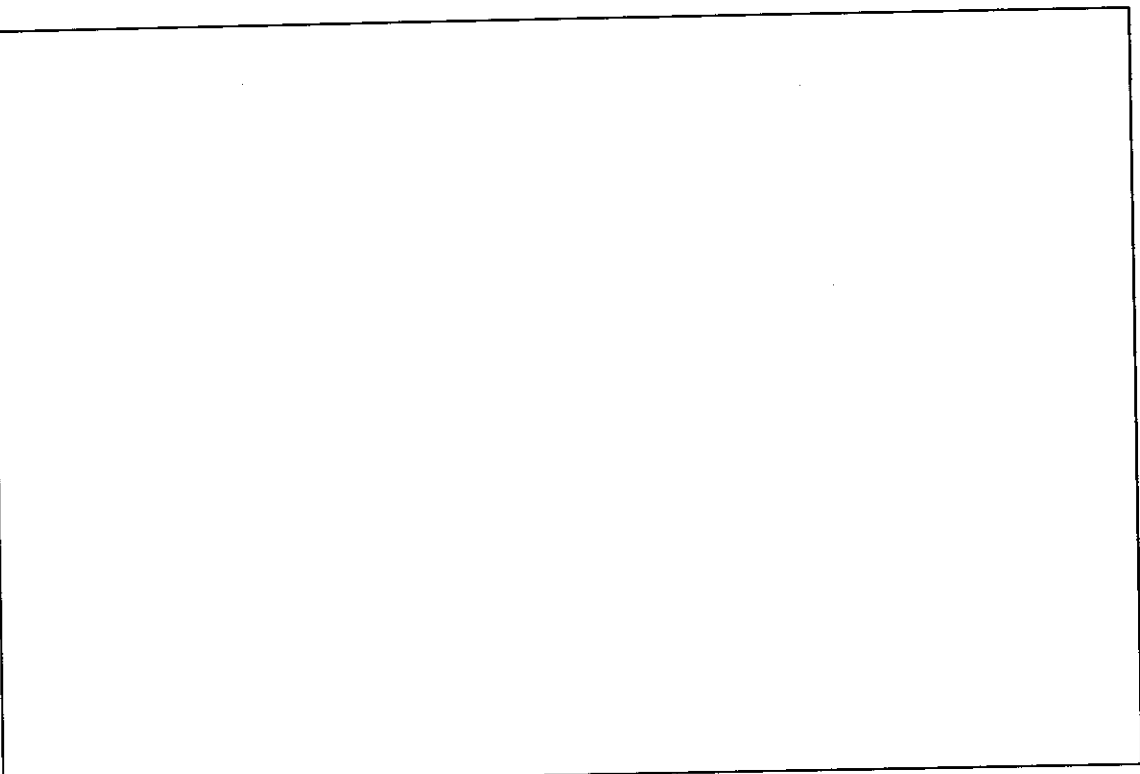
SENSITIVE

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